

SJSZ3956

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
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1. In looking back over the events of the past year the leaders of the Communist Party of Colombia (PCC) have come to the conclusion that the change in government on 13 June 1953 did not bring about any significant modifications in the national political scene. According to the Communists, the present regime must be considered as a continuation of that headed by Laureano GOMEZ. Employees in some sections of the national administration have been changed, but GOMEZ men remain in all important directive posts. Thus, though the previous government is denounced, actually GOMEZ continues to exert power through high-placed officials.
2. The Ministers are Conservatives and are personally still followers of GOMEZ. The members of the National Constituent Assembly are the same as those appointed by GOMEZ, and the eight Conservative judges recently appointed to the Supreme Court by President Gustavo ROJAS Pinilla belong to the Laureanista wing of the party. These judges comprise Domingo SARASTY, first Minister of Government under GOMEZ; Guillermo SALAMANCA, who writes on philosophic and political matters for Diario Grafico; Fernando LONDONO y Londono, named Governor of Caldas by GOMEZ; Manuel BARRETA Parra, diplomat under GOMEZ; German OROZCO Ochoa; Alberto ZULETA Angel, and Roberto GOENAGA. The latter three are also regarded as GOMEZ supporters.
3. The PCC observes that one of the sections of the country which has suffered most from violence has been the Department of Valle. The present Governor of Valle, Diego GARCES Giraldo, is the son of a millionaire who was a first cousin of the BORRERO Olano family. The latter, who own Diario del Pacifico, are the most prominent Conservative directors in Valle, and they have been active in organizing political terrorism in that area. In a recent report to the national government the Valle chief of security denounced the existence of a secret society which has been killing people simply because they are Liberals.
4. In Bogota, friends of GOMEZ remain in high positions. For example, Argemiro DURAN, head of the Empresa de Telefonos, was secretary of the Ministry of Public Works under Jorge LEIVA, and the secretary of that company, Balen PIZANO, is a personal agent of GOMEZ in Bogota. The latter receives propaganda from GOMEZ in Barcelona, Spain, against the present government, which he distributes among followers of the

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former President. According to the PCC, the presence of Laureanistas in administrative positions throughout the country explains the continuance of violence.

5. It is stated that the ROJAS regime is actually more reactionary and clerical than that of GOMEZ. The latter confronted the clergy in many political fields, and was even excommunicated during the life of Archbishop HERRERA Restrepo. This excommunication was lifted several years later by the Pope. In contrast, the present administration has delivered itself into the hands of the clergy, to the point where new episcopal sees are being created. In previous Conservative regimes members of the clergy never occupied public positions in national education, whereas today Father GIRALDO is secretary of education in Caldas. The PCC leaders also observe that clerical influence is being felt in all administrative sectors. For example, before granting legal status to the association of Colombian magicians the Minister of Justice asked for the opinions of Cardinal LUQUE and the Metropolitan Ecclesiastical Tribunal.
6. As a consequence of these observations, and in order to extract from them practical applications for the Party, the PCC directors have warned all members that they should be very prudent in conversations, with wives, sisters, daughters, and women friends. The latter are stated to be close to the Church; they confess everything to priests, who in turn pass the information to the government. The Party believes that a great danger for its activities exists in the confessionals.

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